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# Lambda Letters Project

#34209

Vol. 12, No. 2 February, 2004

[www.lambdaletters.org](http://www.lambdaletters.org)

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(916) 728-1261

## Is the Window of Opportunity Closing?

By Boyce Hinman, Chief Lobbyist

For years the state legislature has been dominated by Democrats. They hold the majority of seats in both houses of the legislature. And Democratic legislators have become more and more liberal over the years. The Democrats also held the governorship for several years. This has been great for our community. We have succeeded in getting a record number of very important bills signed into law.

However, there are clouds on the horizon. It is distinctly possible that the Democrats may lose control of the Assembly in this fall's election. Does that seem unlikely? Consider the following: Early last year no one would have predicted that Gray Davis would be out of office and replaced by a Republican.

Recently the *Sacramento Bee* reported that, in the recall election, Davis lost the vote in 18 of the 48 Democratic-held Assembly districts. In the vote to choose a replacement for Davis, Republican Arnold Schwarzenegger won in 23 Democratic districts. In five of those districts, the percentage of people voting for Schwarzenegger exceeded the average statewide vote for him.

*Continued on page 8*

## AB 205: Get the Facts

You may have heard that AB 205 was passed and signed by Governor Davis in September 2003. You may also have heard that the bill grants registered domestic partners most of the rights and duties of marriage. But do you know what those rights and duties actually are?

The Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund has posted a very informative table on their site that itemizes the rights and duties provided by AB 205. To find it, go to our site's list of online resources: [www.lambdaletters.org/resources.html](http://www.lambdaletters.org/resources.html). Read it and be informed about this important piece of legislation, which takes effect on January 1, 2005.

Topics include: rights and duties to one another, property rights and obligations, protection of your children, death-related matters, employment rights and benefits, entry into the institution, right to act on behalf of and receive information about your partner, rights in judicial and other official proceedings, taxes, licenses, permits, and franchises, nontax financial matters, special benefits provided to public employees and their families, conflicts of interest and required disclosures, discrimination protections, termination of the partnership, rights and duties under federal law, and interstate treatment.

###

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### Lambda Letters Progress Report

#### Letters & Messages Collected

December, 2003	3,964 letters & e-mails
In all of 2003	258,495 letters & e-mails

#### Dollars Spent

December, 2003	\$1,732
In all of 2003	\$51,398

#### Can You Help?

Please support the very important work of the Lambda Letters Project with your contributions.



# Lambda Letters Project

## Mission Statement

To promote the social, economic, and human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex individuals, couples, and families; people affected by HIV/AIDS; people of color; and women by urging elected officials to enact and support legislation that accomplishes this goal.

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We do, occasionally, send mailings on behalf of other worthwhile organizations, but this is done by our own volunteers so that no other organization has the opportunity to copy our mailing lists.

The Lambda Letters Newsletter is published monthly, except in December, by Lambda Letters Project Inc., 6529 Cowboy Way, Citrus Heights, CA 95621.

Send address changes to

Lambda Letters Project, 2528 Madison Avenue, San Diego, CA 92116-2922

or e-mail aeire.stickney@lambdaletters.org.

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Business-card sized ads (3½"×2") \$10, quarter-page ads \$30, third-page ads \$33, half-page ads \$45, full-page ads \$75, full back-page ad \$100. Deadline for payment and camera-ready copy, along with your name and phone number, is the 25th of each month.

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## Don't Know Who Represents You?

 Send your request with a stamped, self-addressed envelope and we'll send you a complete list of your elected officials. Or go to [www.lambdaletters.org](http://www.lambdaletters.org)  to find out who represents you.

## Discrimination Complaints

Have you experienced employment discrimination because of your actual or perceived sexual orientation or because of your age (40 and over), ancestry, color, creed, disability, marital status, medical condition, national origin, race, religion, or sex? Have you been denied family and medical care leave or pregnancy disability leave?

If so, you may register a complaint with the Department of Fair Employment and Housing. In cases of employment discrimination, call the department at

(800) 884-1684. In cases of housing discrimination, call (800) 233-3212.

The person answering the phone will schedule an appointment for you at the Department of Fair Employment and Housing Office which is closest to your home or place of employment.



## Oppose Cuts in ADAP Lifeline to Low-Income, Uninsured Californians

*By Jamie E. Shauvin, Legislative Analyst*

This month we ask that you write to your Assembly member to protest the governor's proposal to create a waiting list for the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP).

ADAP provides access to medications for low-income Californians living with HIV/AIDS who are uninsured or lack adequate prescription drug coverage. Established in October 1987, ADAP provides drugs to individuals who otherwise could not afford them. The drugs provided by ADAP have been determined to prolong the quality of life and delay the deterioration of health among individuals infected with HIV. ADAP is a lifeline for those who otherwise wouldn't be able to afford such treatment.

Governor Schwarzenegger has proposed that enrollment in this program be capped at its current level of 23,500. It is estimated that over 1,440 people with HIV/AIDS would be placed on a waiting list for critical HIV medications within one year. Please add your voice to the opposition to this proposal!

Governor Schwarzenegger's proposed budget also includes cuts to HIV/AIDS services for those people who are currently enrolled in the program. It is critical that our community come together quickly to oppose any proposed service cuts.

Please write to your Assembly member and state that you strongly oppose any proposed service cuts to HIV/AIDS services and that you oppose a cap on ADAP enrollment.

###

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## Tragic Valentines

*By Boyce Hinman, Chief Lobbyist*

February is the month for lovers, the month of Valentine's Day. With more and more people traveling overseas, many people meet and fall in love with citizens of other countries. Long-distance romances are hard to maintain. With heterosexual couples there is an easy solution. The US citizen can marry his or her foreign partner. US law then grants the partner legal permanent residence in the United States. However, the law doesn't allow American citizens to do this for their same-sex partners.

Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vermont) has introduced S 1510, the Permanent Partners Immigration Act of 2003. The purpose of the bill is to allow US citizens to obtain permanent residency for their domestic partners who are currently citizens of another nation. Adam Francoeur, program director of the New York-based Lesbian and Gay Immigration Rights Task Force, estimates an initial surge of up to 20,000 people would seek residency visas if S 1510 became law. He thinks the number of applicants then would drop to about 1,000 a year.

S 1510 was referred to the Immigration Subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee on July 31, 2003. It has been there ever since. Senator Dianne Feinstein is a member of that subcommittee and she is in a crucial position to try to get the bill moving. However, while California's other senator, Barbara Boxer, is a cosponsor of the bill, Feinstein is not. It appears that she has done little, if anything, to move the bill.

Please write to Senator Feinstein and urge her to cosponsor S 1510. Please also ask your friends to call or write her and urge her to cosponsor the bill and get it moving. You can call her toll-free at (800) 648-3516. Ask the operator for Feinstein's office and then leave a message with her receptionist. Because of the time difference between here and Washington, DC, you can call from home before you go to work. You can also send e-mail at <http://feinstein.senate.gov/email.html>.

Please contact the senator as close to Valentine's Day as possible. Anytime will do, of course, but Valentine's Day makes for a particularly timely opportunity. If you have a personal story to relate about a binational couple, by all means tell it. This way we can help our community's binational couples. ###



## Oppose Cuts to Health, Immigrant Programs

By Marty Martinez, Legislative Analyst

Communities of color face many barriers to accessing the healthcare system and additional barriers in achieving parity in health. Specific cuts to health programs proposed recently by Governor Schwarzenegger will make matters worse. Proposals such as cuts to Medi-Cal reimbursements, caps on enrollment in the Healthy Families program, and de-facto reductions in services to immigrants by block-granting them will add to the disproportionate number of people of color who are uninsured and exacerbate the problem of health disparities.

Some of the cuts proposed by the governor include the following:

- ♦ Capping enrollment in the Healthy Families program and establishing waitlists for our children to receive critical services. The governor also proposes creating a two-tiered benefit structure, requiring families with incomes between 201 and 250 percent of the poverty line to either pay enhanced premiums or lose dental and vision care.
- ♦ Cutting Medi-Cal provided reimbursements by 10 percent, on top of a 5 percent cut that was passed last year.
- ♦ Capping Medi-Cal enrollment at January 2004 levels for documented immigrants. The governor is also seeking a federal waiver that may allow him to make further reductions in the Medi-Cal program, such as a multi-tiered benefit structure or higher copayments.

*Continued on page 9*

## Say No to the Terminator

By Adrienne Lauby, Legislative Analyst

Women, children, people living with disabilities, and seniors spoke with one voice after Governor Schwarzenegger called for cuts and spending caps for important state programs. That voice said No.

The governor wants to cut health, education, and other state services by \$16–18 billion. Children needing childcare, children with disabilities, college students, and those using the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) and CalWORKs programs would all be hit hard by these cuts.

Consider the following examples:

- ♦ The Cal Grant program, which aids low-income college students, will be cut 44 percent and individual grants will not rise to cover the expected fee increases. Thus many young people will have to drop out of school entirely.
- ♦ Caps and copayments will reduce the number of families served by regional centers for the developmentally disabled and respite care will be ended.
- ♦ A 29 percent cut in the IHSS program will reduce the number of people available to help low-income people with disabilities, including seniors, to live safely in their own homes. Many disabled people will be forced to leave home for nursing homes—or cemeteries.
- ♦ The CalWORKs program for women with young children will cut individual grant amounts and raise the work requirement. Many children and their parents will become homeless.

*Continued on page 9*

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# February Legislative Update

Compared to January's Legislative Update, now we begin to see some of the bills that legislators have introduced this year. Some of the bills shown below have no bill number. That's because the legislator has not actually introduced the bill yet. It will get a bill number once the bill is introduced in the Legislature.

There are two relevant deadlines at this time. Before a bill is introduced its concept must be submitted to the Legislative Counsel's office, which creates the actual wording of the bill. Then it can be introduced in the Legislature. The deadline for getting concepts to the Legislative Counsel's office is January 23. Exceptions do occur but, generally, if the concept is not submitted by the deadline, the bill cannot be introduced in 2004.

The deadline for actually introducing a bill in the Legislature is February 20. Again, there are exceptions. However, generally if a bill is not introduced by that date it cannot be introduced this year.

## HIV/AIDS Issue

**SB ??** (John Vasconcellos, D-San Jose)

**Purpose:** To authorize a licensed pharmacist to sell hypodermic needles or syringes to a person without a prescription under specified conditions, and to authorize a person to possess up to 10 hypodermic needles or syringes if acquired through an authorized source. This would facilitate authorized clean-needle exchange programs around the state.

**Status:** Vasconcellos expects to introduce the bill in early February.

**LLP Position:** Support.

## Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender/ Intersex Issues

**AB ??** (Mark Leno, D-San Francisco)

**Purpose:** To allow same-sex couples to marry in California.

**Status:** Leno expects to introduce the bill on February 12.

**LLP Position:** Support.

**AB ??** (John Laird, D-Santa Cruz)

**Purpose:** To amend nondiscrimination language wherever it occurs throughout the various codes of California law. To make that language uniform throughout, the nondiscrimination language found in the Fair Employment and Housing Act will be used as the model. Sexual orientation, gender identity, and language protecting women and other minorities will be amended into many of these government codes.

**Status:** Laird plans to introduce the bill in mid-February.

**LLP Position:** Support.

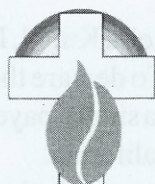
**AJR ??** (Sally Lieber, D-San Jose)

**Purpose:** To approve an Assembly Joint Resolution urging Congress and President Bush to support the Permanent Partners Immigration Act. This act, now being considered in Congress, would allow US citizens to obtain permanent legal US residency for their domestic partners who are citizens of another country. Currently straight couples can obtain the same result by marriage.

**Status:** Lieber expects to introduce this bill in mid-February.

**LLP Position:** Support.

*Continued on page 6*



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## Legislative Update

*Continued from page 5*

### *People of Color Issues*

**AB 25** (Fabian Nunez, D—Los Angeles)

**Purpose:** To require state agencies to accept as valid identification a foreign identification card issued by another nation, as defined, to its citizens or nationals, subject to specified exceptions. Would allow police officers to request additional ID if the officers thought the original ID might be a fake.

**Status:** Sent to the Senate floor for a final vote in that house.

**LLP Position:** Support.

**AB 292** (Leland Yee, D—San Francisco)

**Purpose:** To provide that a state or local governmental agency, or a public or private agency supported by state funding, shall not use any child, or permit any child to be used, as a translator or interpreter in any matter involving the business or function of that agency except as specified. Would require each agency that receives state funding to have available for inspection an established procedure for providing competent translation services.

**Status:** Currently in Senate Appropriations Committee.

**LLP Position:** Support.

**AB 858** (Jackie Goldberg, D—Los Angeles)

**Purpose:** To generally prohibit public schools from using certain specified terms as a school or athletic team name, mascot, or nickname.

**Status:** Failed in the Assembly. A revote in the Assembly was to occur in late-January after the deadline for submission of this article.

**LLP Position:** Support.

**AB 1657** (Wilma Chan, D—Oakland)

**Purpose:** To prohibit the sale, offering for sale, distribution, or import into this state of any prepackaged gelatin-based (like Jell-O) alcoholic beverage unless it is sold, offered for sale, or intended to be sold in a business establishment (for consumption on the premises) that prohibits the presence of persons under 21 years of age on its premises.

**Status:** Currently in the Senate Governmental Organization Committee.

**LLP Position:** Support.

**AB 1796** (Mark Leno, D—San Francisco)

**Purpose:** To provide that a convicted drug felon shall be eligible for aid under the Food Stamp Program.

**Status:** Introduced.

**LLP Position:** Support.

**AB 1815** (Wilma Chan, D—Oakland)

**Purpose:** To raise the income tax rate and the alternate minimum income tax rate on California's wealthiest citizens. This would reduce the pressure to make cuts to vital HIV/AIDS programs and other health and social service programs.

**Status:** Introduced.

**LLP Position:** Support.

**AJR 54** (Robert Pacheco, R—City of Industry)

**Purpose:** To petition Congress to revise the formula used to calculate the federal Medicaid assistance percentage (FMAP) to consider, in addition to a state's per-capita income, the total number of persons living in poverty in that state.

**Status:** Referred to the Assembly Health Committee. No hearing date set yet.

**LLP Position:** Support. This bill would provide more federal money for the Medi-Cal program and reduce the need for enrollment caps or budget cuts to the program.

**SB 17** (Martha Escutia, D—Norwalk)

**Purpose:** To amend the laws relating to property taxes on nonresidential commercial and industrial property to eliminate loopholes that have allowed such properties to evade reassessment upon sale of the property.

**Status:** Awaiting a final vote in the Assembly.

**LLP Position:** Support. This bill would increase tax revenues and reduce the need to cut spending on health and social services programs.

**SB 921** (Sheila Kuehl, D—Los Angeles)

**Purpose:** To declare the intent of the legislature to implement a single-payer, universal healthcare delivery system in California.

**Status:** Currently in the Assembly Health Committee.

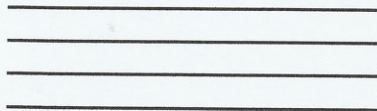
**LLP Position:** Support.



name

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city, state, zip



Feb 15, 2004

Arnold Schwarzenegger's proposal to create a waiting DAP).

ations for low-income Californians living with HIV prescription drug coverage. The drugs provided by quality of life and delay the deterioration of health is a lifeline for those who otherwise wouldn't be able

enrollment in this program be capped at its current people with HIV/AIDS would be placed on a waiting ear. Many of those could get seriously ill, become

les cuts to HIV/AIDS services in addition to denying opposition to this proposal!

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***People of Color Issues***

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**Status:** Currently in the Senate Governmental Organization Committee.

**LLP Position:** Support.



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city, state, zip

Feb 15, 2004

The Hon. Darrell Steinberg  
The California State Legislature  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Assembly Member Steinberg:

I am writing to ask you to please oppose Governor Schwarzenegger's proposal to create a waiting list for the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP).

The ADAP program provides access to medications for low-income Californians living with HIV and AIDS who are uninsured or lack adequate prescription drug coverage. The drugs provided by ADAP have been determined to prolong the quality of life and delay the deterioration of health among individuals infected with HIV. ADAP is a lifeline for those who otherwise wouldn't be able to afford such medications.

Governor Schwarzenegger has proposed that enrollment in this program be capped at its current level of 23,500. It is estimated that over 1,440 people with HIV/AIDS would be placed on a waiting list for critical HIV medications within one year. Many of those could get seriously ill, become unemployable, or die.

Governor Schwarzenegger's draft budget includes cuts to HIV/AIDS services in addition to denying access to ADAP. Please add your voice to the opposition to this proposal!

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Legislative Offices

Continued from page 1

**Page 1 of 2**

**AB 25 (Heller)**

**Purpose:** To amend the

definition of "person

with a mental health

disorder" to include

any person who is

subject to a court

order for involuntary

commitment.

**Effective Date:**

**Author:**

**Staff:**

**Comments:**

**Analysis:**

**Recommendation:**

**Comments:**

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Governor Schwarzenegger's third budget includes cuts to HIV/AIDS services in addition to denying access to ADAP. Please add your voice to the opposition to this proposal.

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**Analysis:**

**Recommendation:**

**Comments:**

**Comments:**

**Comments:**



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city, state, zip

Feb 15, 2004

The Hon. Dianne Feinstein  
The US Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Feinstein:

I am disappointed to hear that you have not become a cosponsor of S. 1510, the Permanent Partners Immigration Act. This bill is currently in the Immigration Subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee. Since you are a member of that committee, you are in a particularly good position to try and move the bill. You are well-known for your persuasive legislative skills. I urge you to use those skills to get this bill moving and approved by Congress this year.

S. 1510 would allow US citizens to obtain permanent residency for their domestic partners who are currently citizens of another nation. Adam Francoeur, program director of the New York-based Lesbian and Gay Immigration Rights Task Force, estimates an initial surge of up to 20,000 people would seek residency visas if S. 1510 became law. He thinks the number of applicants then would drop to about 1,000 a year.

You have a large gay and lesbian constituency in your state. Your state has passed domestic partner legislation that grants most of the rights of marriage to domestic partners in California. In fact, the California Legislature is now considering legislation to permit same-sex couples to obtain marriage licenses in our state.

Clearly you have a mandate to support legislation like S. 1510, which would protect the rights and needs of domestic partners in just one more way. I urge you to do all in your power to move this bill and get it signed into law this year.

Sincerely,

Please oppose the cruel cuts proposed by the governor.

Sincerely,



Feb 12, 2004

The Hon. Dianne Feinstein  
The US Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Feinstein:

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Sincerely,



---

name

---

address

---

city, state, zip

Feb 15, 2004

The Hon. Darrell Steinberg  
The California State Legislature  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Assembly Member Steinberg:

Please oppose Governor Schwarzenegger's proposed cuts to the Medi-Cal and Healthy Families programs. These cuts would fall most heavily on people of color. That should not be allowed to happen. I oppose the following proposed budget cuts:

- Capping enrollment for the Healthy Families program
- Establishing a two-tiered benefit structure for Healthy Families
- Reducing Medi-Cal provider reimbursements by 10%
- A Medi-Cal enrollment cap for documented immigrants
- Seeking any federal waiver that may lead to reductions in Medi-Cal
- Combining services to immigrants into single block grants to counties

According to the California Health Interview Survey, over 4.6 million Californians lack health insurance. Of the uninsured, 60% are Latino, 9% are Asian or Pacific Islander, 3.3% are African Americans, and 0.1% are Native Americans and Alaska Natives. The governor's cuts would result in even higher uninsured rates among people of color. That is not right.

The Healthy Families and Medi-Cal programs are a vital source of healthcare for California's communities of color. Nearly 84% of children in the Healthy Families program are children of color and approximately 65% of Medi-Cal recipients are persons of color. Please don't tear holes in this safety net.

Cuts in provider reimbursements will reduce the already small number of providers willing to serve communities of color. The quality of care received will be impacted as well. These providers are an important source of culturally and linguistically appropriate care. Misunderstandings of cultural practices and beliefs can result in negative health outcomes.

Please oppose the cruel cuts proposed by the governor.

Sincerely,



name

address

city, state, zip

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The California State Legislature  
Sacramento, CA 95814

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Sincerely,



name

address

city, state, zip

Feb 15, 2004

The Hon. Deborah Ortiz  
The California State Legislature  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator Ortiz:

I'm writing to implore you to oppose program caps as you negotiate the state budget. Demand that program cuts which might have an immediate, serious effect on the life or health of the individuals served be cut last. Support new taxes in the form of higher income tax rates for wealthy Californians, increased state capital gains taxes, and/or higher sales taxes on luxury items.

I am not asking you to take these potentially unpopular stands lightly. I do it because the poorest and weakest among us will suffer irreparable harm from the current budget proposals of Governor Schwarzenegger.

I'm especially concerned by the following schemes:

- A Cal Grant budget cut of 44%
- Caps and copayments at regional centers for the developmentally disabled and the end of respite care
- A 29% cut of In-Home Supportive Service (IHSS)
- The CalWORKs cut of individual grant amounts and increased work requirement

You were elected to represent California's citizens. Please fight hard on our behalf. Protect the weak and prevent changes that will make the budget even harder to balance in the future.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,



name  
address  
city, state, zip

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The California State Legislature  
Sacramento, CA 95814

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Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

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## Women's Issues

**AB 1813** (Rebecca Cohn, D-Campbell)

**Purpose:** To provide increased penalties for people convicted of committing domestic violence in the presence of a child.

**Status:** Introduced.

**LLP Position:** Support.

**AJR 53** (Sarah Reyes, D-Fresno)

**Purpose:** To petition Congress to reinstate the breast cancer research stamp program. Part of the proceeds of the sale of these postage stamps supports breast cancer research.

**Status:** Referred to Assembly Health Committee. No hearing date set yet.

**LLP Position:** Support.

**AJR 57** (Hanna-Beth Jackson, D-Santa Barbara)

**Purpose:** To petition Congress to stand firm in their resolve to uphold the intent and substance of the United States Supreme Court decision in *Roe v. Wade* relating to reproductive rights, and to encourage all Americans to participate in the national celebration, "The March for Women's Lives," in recognition of that decision's historic importance in promoting women's rights.

**Status:** Approved by the Assembly Judiciary Committee. Sent to the floor of the Assembly for a final vote in that house.

**LLP Position:** Support.

###



### Contact Your Members of Congress!

You'd be amazed how easy it is. Call them toll-free at (800) 648-3516.

Ask the operator to transfer you to your legislator's office.

If the line is busy, try again later; you'll get through eventually.

Don't know who represents you in Congress?

Visit the Lambda Letters website:

[www.lambdaletters.org](http://www.lambdaletters.org)

Click on the Who Represents You link in the left navigation bar to find out!

# The Pen Is Mightier Than The Sword.

ECCO IS PROUD TO BE A PART OF THE ACTIVIST GLBT COMMUNITY. WHEN WE WORK TOGETHER, WE CAN ACCOMPLISH ANYTHING!

The Elections Committee of the County of Orange (ECCO) is a non-partisan Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, HIV/AIDS, and Women's Political Action Committee serving Orange County and Long Beach, California.

**ECCO supports the Lambda Letters Project**

Join us as we financially assist local, state, and federal candidates and organizations that support the issues important to our community.



[www.eccopac.org](http://www.eccopac.org)

Continued on page 8



## Window of Opportunity Closing?

*Continued from page 1*

The state legislature and the governor are in the midst of a very messy budget battle. If they do not succeed in balancing the budget, the public may be very angry and they may blame the legislature and the Democrats who control it. They may take out their anger by dumping Democratic legislators in this fall's election. The legislature already has a rating in opinion polls close to that of Davis prior to his recall. So dumping the Dems is a real possibility.

All this could be very bad news for our community. A Republican-controlled Assembly is much less likely to pass important LGBTI civil rights or HIV/AIDS legislation. The situation might be made worse for the fact that not all Democrats vote our way anyway. For example, the Assembly passed AB 205 last year by the bare 41 votes needed to approve it. In the June 4 vote on the bill, seven Democrats abstained. AB 205 is the bill that gave domestic partners in California many of the rights of marriage.

So as insurance, it is important that our community accomplish as much as possible this year. Any really important bills should be introduced and passed this

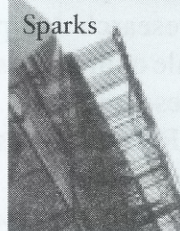
year, if possible, just in case we face a much less friendly legislature next year.

We need you to support Lambda Letters as much as you can with your time, effort, and contributions. Please help us to be as effective as possible during this crucial year. Please help us accomplish as much as possible before the window of opportunity closes.

###

*What happens when women put pen to paper... brush to canvas... lens to scene?*

## Sparks



*spark* — n. 1. A fiery particle resulting from friction. 2. A flash of light. 3. A trace or suggestion. 4. A vital, animating or activating force.

Sparks is a forum for the creative and intellectual expression of women through short stories, essays, articles, poetry, photography, and art. Contact us or check out our website for information on submissions and subscriptions.

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# The Word is out. Outword

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## POC Issue

*Continued from page 4*

- ♦ Combining services to immigrants, including Healthy Families, into single block grants to counties. This would allow counties to set up enrollment caps and make immigrant services compete for funds. In addition to Healthy Families, programs to be block-granted include the California Food Assistance Program and CalWORKs.

Cuts to Medi-Cal and Healthy Families will result in even higher uninsured rates among people of color. Communities of color already make up the majority of the uninsured in California. According to the California Health Interview Survey, over 4.6 million Californians lack health insurance. Of the uninsured, 60 percent are Latino, 9 percent are Asian or Pacific Islander, 3.3 percent are African Americans, and 0.1 percent are Native Americans and Alaska Natives. People of color represent over 75 percent of the uninsured in California.

Healthy Families and Medi-Cal are a vital source of healthcare for California's communities of color. Nearly 84 percent of children in the Healthy Families program are children. Approximately one-half million children of color receive critical care from this program. Latinos/as make up over 66 percent of Healthy Families enrollment, while Asian and Pacific Islanders are over 13 percent, African Americans are 3 percent, and Native Americans are just under 1 percent.

Medi-Cal is important to the health of California's children and adults. Approximately 65 percent of Medi-Cal recipients are persons of color. This is nearly 4 million of the over 6 million individuals on Medi-Cal. Latinos/as make up over 46 percent of the Medi-Cal population, while African Americans are 12 percent, Asian and Pacific Islanders are 7 percent, and Native Americans are 1 percent.

Cuts to Medi-Cal providers will result in fewer providers in communities of color and less culturally competent care. Cuts in provider reimbursements will reduce the already small number of providers who serve communities of color. The quality of care received will be impacted as well, as community providers are an important source of culturally and linguistically appropriate care.

Don't let these cuts take effect. Write your Assembly member and urge him or her to oppose the proposed cuts to these vital health programs. ###

## Women's Issue

*Continued from page 4*

Dropouts, homelessness, death: These are strong words. In this case, however, they describe the true effect that Governor Schwarzenegger's proposed cuts will have on the poorest and weakest people living in our great state.

This does not have to happen. Different choices can still be made.

For example, in the governor's budget the California Department of Corrections will add over 1,200 additional positions in the prisons at a cost of nearly \$100 million. Do we really need that new spending?

In his "State of the State" address Governor Schwarzenegger said, "When individuals overspend themselves into trouble, financial counselors often tell them to consolidate their credit card balances so they can work their way out of trouble—and also tear up their credit cards. That is what our California Recovery Plan is all about."

But families facing hard times also take second jobs or work extra hours. California needs to increase some taxes to boost the income side of the budget.

Join Lambda Letters and citizens across the state. Please write to your senator. Oppose program caps.

Demand that program cuts that might seriously affect the life or health of Californians come last to the chopping block.

Support new taxes in the form of higher income tax rates for wealthy Californians, increased state capital gains taxes, or higher sales taxes on luxury items.

Sign the enclosed sample letter or compose your own (you can find the text on the LLP Web site), but please do it soon.

###

### Deborah A. Brooks

Certified Public Accountant



- ACCOUNTING
- TAX PLANNING
- TAX PREPARATION

*My Place or Yours!*

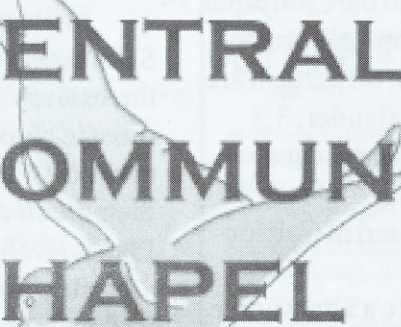
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